

**REMARKS**

Claims 1-38 are pending in the above application. Claims 2-12, 14-24 and 26-38 have been withdrawn from consideration.

The Office Action dated September 15, 2005, has been received and carefully reviewed. In that Office Action, claims 1, 13 and 25 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by JP 2001-204029, referred to in the Office Action as "Toshiyuki." Reconsideration and allowance of claims 1, 13, and 25 is respectfully requested in view of the above amendments and following remarks.

As an initial matter, it is noted that the claim set that accompanied the response to the election requirement identified claims 1, 13 and 25 as "original" even though these claims had been amended by a June 10, 2004, Preliminary Amendment. With the exception of these claim status identifiers, claims 2-38 appear to incorporate all changes made by that preliminary amendment. Claim 1 of that claim set, however, did not reflect all changes that were made by preliminary amendment. The claim set presented herewith is believed to accurately reflect all changes that were made to the claims by preliminary amendment, and includes proper claim status identifiers and additional amendments.

The objection to claim 25 has been addressed by the above amendment.

Claim 1 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Toshiyuki. By the above amendment, claim 1 has been amended to require that the filtering of regions proximate a boundary between two regions be based upon a boundary strength value. This type of filtering and its benefits is discussed in the present application beginning at page 12, line 4. Toshiyuki does not show or suggest filtering based on boundary strength as now claimed, and claim 1 is submitted to be allowable over Toshiyuki for at least this reason.

Claims 13 and 25 also include limitations related to filtering based on boundary strength and are submitted to be allowable for the at least the same reasons as claim 1.

POWER OF ATTORNEY

A new power of attorney and change of correspondence address will be filed shortly. In the meantime, it is respectfully requested that this Reply be accepted under the provisions of 37 C.F.R. 1.34; MPEP 405.

CONCLUSION

Each issue raised in the Office Action dated September 15, 2005, has been addressed, and it is believed that claims 1, 13 and 38 are in condition for allowance. Wherefore, reconsideration and allowance of these claims is earnestly solicited.

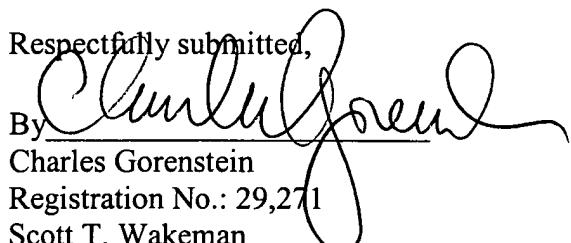
Should there be any outstanding matters that need to be resolved in the present application, the examiner is respectfully requested to contact Scott Wakeman (Reg. No. 37,750) at the telephone number of the undersigned below, to conduct an interview in an effort to expedite prosecution in connection with the present application.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16 or 1.17; particularly, extension of time fees.

Dated: January 17, 2006

Respectfully submitted,

By

  
Charles Gorenstein

Registration No.: 29,271

Scott T. Wakeman

Registration No.: 37,750

BIRCH, STEWART, KOLASCH & BIRCH, LLP

8110 Gatehouse Road

Suite 100 East

P.O. Box 747

Falls Church, Virginia 22040-0747

(703) 205-8000

Attorneys for Applicant